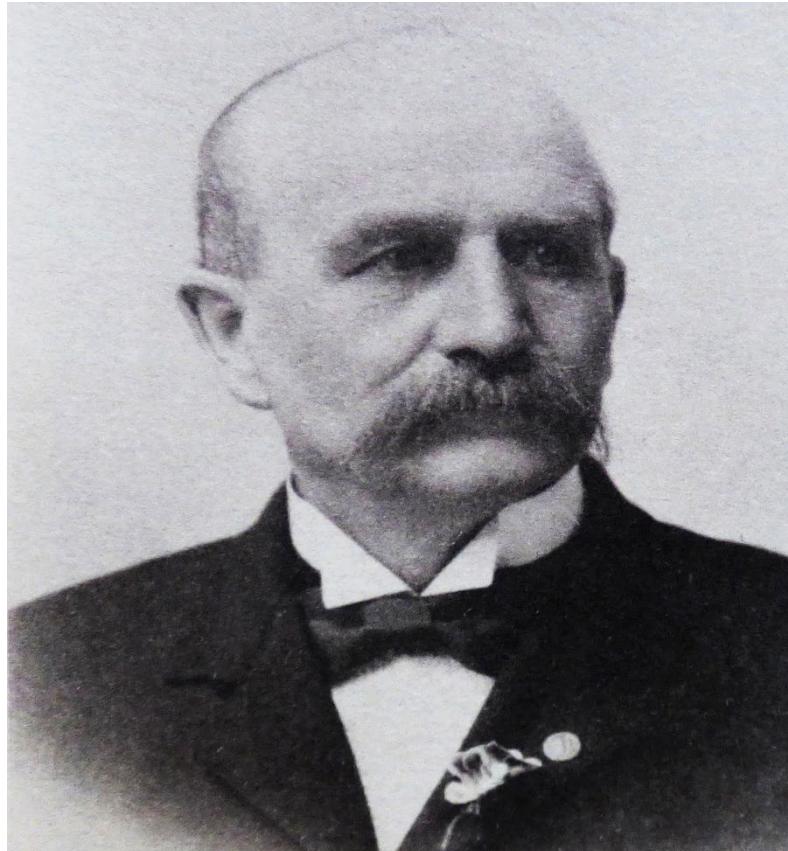


Captain Jacob Ruger, 76th. Illinois Infantry



Jacob Ruger was born in Wurttemberg, Germany, on December 11, 1835. He lived in his native land until about seventeen years of age, where he learned the harness-making trade, of which he became a master. Many of his neighbors were leaving for the new world, and he became so strongly imbued with the opportunities that the United States offered, that he also left the Fatherland to make his fortune in the land of promise. He was accompanied by his brother, Charles. They first went to Pittsburgh, but soon caught the go west spirit, and in 1854 he went to Joliet where for two years he worked in a large harness shop. He came to Momence in 1856 and had resided here since that time. In 1858, Mr. Ruger went into the harness business on River Street in a small way. His reputation for turning out honest goods caused his business to expand, and step by step, he established a name which was closely allied with good harness for miles around.

In 1857 he was married to Narcissa Burcham. The union was a particularly happy one. Just as Mr. Ruger was getting his business and home established, the civil war broke out. Filled with that patriotism so characteristic of the German race, he closed his business, left his home and loved ones, and enlisted in Co. H., 76th Illinois Volunteer Infantry. He served with his company until the close of the war, being honorably discharged at Galveston, Texas, July 22, 1865.

Soon after leaving for the front, he was promoted to second lieutenant, and upon the death of Capt. Plummer, was elected Captain by a unanimous vote of the company. He served as captain for two years, and participated in the battles at Vicksburg, Jackson, and the siege of Ft. Blakely. While his company was in the thick of these battles, he escaped injury.

After the close of the war, he returned to Momence and again took up the harness business, which he successfully conducted until about 1914, when he turned it over to his son Roderick R. He also took an active interest in the affairs of the city, both in a civic and political way. He served for several years on the village board. In 1882 he was elected supervisor for Momence township, which position he held until 1892, when he was appointed County Treasurer to fill an unexpired term and served for three years. At the expiration of his term, he was again elected as supervisor and held that office continuously until his death. For many years he was one of the directors of the Momence Building and Loan Association and had much to do with the remarkable success of the association.



Jacob Ruger's Harness Shop – 119 East Washington Street

Few men had the friendship and love that he possessed of all. He was square in all his dealings and was a friend to everyone and when he passed through the trying ordeal in December 1916, he received many tokens of friendship and respect.



Interior photos of Jacob Ruger's Harness Shop

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